### 1NC: Saudi Arabia PIC

#### Counterplan text: countries will prohibit the production of nuclear power except for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

#### Saudi Arabia is facing an energy security crisis; only nuclear power can prevent economic damage.

Sukin 15 Lauren (Sukin is an editor and researcher at The Century Foundation. She is currently studying political science and literary arts at Brown University, where she will be a senior this fall.) “In Saudi Arabia, nuclear energy for nuclear energy’s sake” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists July 28th 2015 <http://thebulletin.org/saudi-arabia-nuclear-energy-nuclear-energy%E2%80%99s-sake8570> JW

In March, while world leaders were scrambling to salvage the Iranian nuclear negotiations in Lausanne, Saudi Arabia signed a $2 billion deal with South Korea to investigate the joint construction of two nuclear reactors over the next 20 years. Many pundits in the United States reacted to the news with suspicion: Was Saudi Arabia’s move toward nuclear energy actually a strategic cover-up for the development of nuclear weapons? No, the truth is much simpler: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will build nuclear energy technology because it wants nuclear energy. Though this abridges the story, it’s important to consider that the Kingdom does have often-glossed-over yet legitimate reasons to desire nuclear energy in its own right. Escalating energy demand. The Saudis have a problem with energy security. Electricity needs have skyrocketed because of a combination of rising consumer and industrial demand and the country's increasing need for energy-guzzling water desalination. In 2008, the country faced a 10 percent annual increase in electricity demand in its urban centers and a 7 percent increase nationwide. An increase in the domestic consumption of oil and natural gas has satisfied some of that demand, and Saudi growth seems to be leveling off, but electricity demand nevertheless continues to grow. The Saudi government now anticipates a need for a 107 percent increase in electricity generation by 2032, though others estimate the situation to be worse, requiring closer to a 250 percent increase by 2028. Saudi Arabia’s consumer electricity demand is unusually high, partly because the Kingdom has traditionally kept energy prices at about 3 cents per kilowatt-hour (one fourth the average US price), giving consumers no incentive to conserve. That the Saudis are growing—in number and in wealth—also means more Saudis want more energy than ever before. The issue is only worsening: From 2000 to 2012, per capita energy use increased by more than 30 percent. And Saudi Arabia cannot simply raise prices, because the low cost is the result of a critical political deal to share oil wealth. Energy-intensive industrial development puts another strain on energy resources. Part of the country’s growth—GDP rose by more than 4 percent in 2014—has come from the expansion of manufacturing activities. The Kingdom had more than 32 times as many factories in 2013 as in 1974, and its industrial spending over the same time period increased by 750 percent. The third leg of increasing demand is fresh water, which comes from desalination plants that require their own power stations. Desalination is more common in Saudi Arabia than in any other country in the region, providing 70 percent of the water used by Saudi cities. It is the country’s only large-scale option: There are no permanent bodies of water in the country’s interior and very little rain. Fossil fuel is for exports. Although Saudi Arabia has a vast stock of hydrocarbons, the Saudis cannot simply satiate their energy demand with them, at least not for long. As political analyst Maha Hosain Aziz noted in a CNN special report last year, “everyone from Citigroup to Chatham House has suggested Saudi Arabia—the world’s biggest oil exporter—could face oil shortages in the next 10 to 15 years.” In theory, Saudi Arabia could burn its supplies and hope more are found. To a certain extent, this is the status quo; the country uses more than one fourth of its crude oil production domestically each year. But that strategy doesn’t make economic sense. Saudi Arabia relies on energy exports for 90 percent of its government revenue. Because **Riyadh** can get more for its oil abroad than at home, it shouldn’t, and is trying not to, use fossil fuels domestically. With rising energy demand, energy diversity has become an ever-greater national priority. Nuclear vs. renewables. Nuclear power provides energy security. Nuclear power plants have a life expectancy of 40 years or more and provide large amounts of relatively low-cost energy. Nuclear power also has the potential to resolve growing emissions concerns in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia hopes to build 16 reactors by 2032, and by 2040 it hopes to have added 17 gigawatts of capacity—enough to provide 15 percent of the country’s power requirement. In the other corner is solar power. In 2012, Saudi Arabia announced an ambitious solar goal: 41 gigawatts of capacity by 2032, which would provide enough electricity to meet 20 percent of that year’s demand. However, that timetable is aggressive; solar power is expensive and virtually nonexistent in the Kingdom today. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has been slow to meet solar investment goals due to competing government interests and technical barriers such as sandstorms. Of course, nuclear energy comes with its own challenges. It’s expensive—costing $4 billion to $10 billion per reactor—but Saudi Arabia isn’t just oil rich, it’s cash rich. Nuclear waste poses a technical challenge, but Saudi Arabia has tentatively identified suitable sites for disposal. There is also the risk of meltdowns or terrorism, but the Saudis have staffed the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, an entire city dedicated to the cause, with qualified scientists and researchers working to reduce risks. These problems are killing nuclear energy elsewhere. In the United States, for example, political fights about nuclear waste have dragged on without resolution, while high costs and public opposition because of safety concerns have chipped away at the domestic nuclear power industry. Though the United States remains the world’s largest nuclear energy producer, growth in the sector has stagnated, while global interest has grown. Saudi Arabia, however, is prepared to leap many of nuclear’s biggest hurdles. And its regional compatriots, from the United Arab Emirates to Turkey, have also kick-started their own domestic nuclear power programs.

#### Saudi Arabia is fine now but a collapse would destroy the global economy and cause regional wars.

Karasik et al 8/10 Theodore Karasik and Joseph Cozza “What If Saudi Arabia Collapses?” Lobelog Foreign Policy August 10th 2016 <https://lobelog.com/what-if-the-state-of-saudi-arabia-collapses/> JW

Consequences for Region and the World The collapse of the Saudi state would have grave implications for the region and the world. As illustrated by Libya, Syria, and Yemen, state collapse creates a vacuum for radical jihadist groups to claim new territory. Currently, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is pushing against the Saudi border with Yemen and the Islamic State (ISIS or IS) in Iraq and Syria poses a constant threat to the kingdom’s north. Thus, civil war, instability, and high levels of sectarian tension would likely be fertile ground for these groups to grow and expand their control, threaten the holy sites, and perpetuate regional instability. Washington’s national security establishment has expressed concerns about turmoil escalating in Saudi Arabia if MBS’s reform agenda fails to achieve its objectives. Some see the kingdom at a crossroads and fear that the kingdom’s collapse would benefit the Islamic State. Regarding MBS possibly becoming the next king, one anonymous Saudi expert told NBC News, “It’s him or it’s ISIS.” The July 4 attacks in three Saudi cities (Medina, Jeddah, and Qatif) underscored the significance of the militant Salafist-Jihadist threat not only to the country’s security but also Al Saud’s prestige and Islamic legitimacy as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. The intended attack by IS adherents on the Prophet’s Mosque during the end of Ramadan signals the Islamic State’s intent to usurp the Al Saud much as the apocalyptic leader Juhayman al-Otaybi did when he seized the Grand Mosque in 1979. “This attack has made it very clear that ISIS does not seem to believe in any moral red lines whatsoever,” said Fahad Nazer, a leading expert on Saudi Arabia. “Even al-Qaeda, which is certainly brutal in its own right, has never targeted Muslims in their houses of worship. ISIS has done that repeatedly.” A civil war in the Arabian Peninsula would also challenge long-standing alliances. Instability, the threat to the holy cities, and the possibility of jihadist gains would encourage states with high stakes (Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Pakistan, U.S., etc.) to react. In fact, UAE officials have even made contingency plans for a potential state collapse in Saudi Arabia, a risk which none of the kingdom’s neighbors can afford to ignore. These states would certainly move to secure the holy sites and combat terror cells, but solving the civil war would be a massive challenge. There would be considerable pressure to support the Saud family, but supporting the Wahhabi religious establishment over a reform movement would cause domestic complications in some of these countries that resent the kingdom’s influence across the region. Pakistan, which has a “special bilateral relationship” with Saudi Arabia obligating their military to defend Mecca and Medina and protect Saudi Arabia’s territorial integrity, would face the most pressure to intervene militarily on behalf of the Saud government should turmoil intensify. The two nations have a long history of military and security cooperation, and there is little doubt that Pakistan would act to protect the Al Saud rulers. In addition, the Egyptian military is present in the northern border areas of Saudi Arabia helping to augment Pakistani forces supporting SANG and the Saudi border guard. Iran and Oil The geopolitical tsunami that would result from Saudi Arabia’s collapse would have enormous consequences regarding Iranian influence across the region. From Iraq to Lebanon, and from Yemen to Syria, the struggle on the part of hardline Sunni Islamists to counter Shi’ism and Iran’s reach would enter a new phase should Saudi Arabia cease to exist as a unified nation-state. It is not entirely clear how Iran would react to state-collapse in Saudi Arabia, especially considering instability in the region would present a security risk to shipping and trade in the Persian Gulf. Although Iran would likely avoid direct involvement in a conflict in the Arabian Peninsula, it would certainly attempt to capitalize on a regional power vacuum created by a diminished Saudi Arabia by consolidating its political and military influence in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Eastern Saudi Arabia, and, if instability spreads, Shi’ite-majority Bahrain. Diminished oil output by its regional rival would also increase demand for Iranian oil, boosting their economy. There is also no clear Sunni successor state to check Iran’s regional influence. Egypt’s economy is too weak, and Jordan is surrounded on all sides by instability. Finally, Saudi Arabia as a failed state would send international markets into free fall. State collapse in Saudi Arabia would halt oil production, significantly increasing the price of oil and dramatically weakening global economies. Such an increase would spark a severe global economic crisis. The longer Saudi Arabia is destabilized, the more difficult it would be for the world to pull out of the crisis and recover. The socio-political ramifications of such an economic shock could be catastrophic and disastrous for both the region and the world. If the government faces large-scale demonstrations calling for social and political liberalization while facing tribal, familial, and religious elite abandonment, the result could be instability, civil war, and/or state collapse. Again this result is far from inevitable. The Saudis might be able to successfully implement the Vision 2030 reforms while ensuring elite and citizen support. The country must also be open to course corrections in the event of economic turmoil or elite resentment in order to prevent instability.

#### Extinction.

Bearden 2k Lt Col. Beardon, PhD, 2000 http://www.cheniere.org/correspondence/042500%20-%20modified.htm Lt. Col Thomas E. Bearden (retd.) PhD, MS (nuclear engineering), BS (mathematics - minor electronic engineering) Co-inventor - the 2002 Motionless Electromagnetic Generator - a replicated overunity EM generator Listed in Marquis' Who'sWho in America, 2004 The Tom Bearden Website From: Tom Bearden To: (Correspondent) Subj: Zero-Point Energy Date: Original Tue, 25 Apr 2000 12:36:29 -0500 Modified and somewhat updated Dec. 29, 2000

History bears out that desperate nations take desperate actions. Prior to the final economic collapse, the stress on nations will have increased the intensity and number of their conflicts, to the point where the arsenals of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) now possessed by some 25 nations, are almost certain to be released. As an example, suppose a starving North Korea {[7]} launches nuclear weapons upon Japan and South Korea, including U.S. forces there, in a spasmodic suicidal response. Or suppose a desperate China — whose long-range nuclear missiles (some) can reach the United States — attacks Taiwan. In addition to immediate responses, the mutual treaties involved in such scenarios will quickly draw other nations into the conflict, escalating it significantly. Strategic nuclear studies have shown for decades that, under such extreme stress conditions, once a few nukes are launched, adversaries and potential adversaries are then compelled to launch on perception of preparations by one's adversary. The real legacy of the MAD concept is this side of the MAD coin that is almost never discussed. Without effective defense, the only chance a nation has to survive at all is to launch immediate full-bore pre-emptive strikes and try to take out its perceived foes as rapidly and massively as possible. As the studies showed, rapid escalation to full WMD exchange occurs. Today, a great percent of the WMD arsenals that will be unleashed, are already on site within the United States itself {[8]}. The resulting great Armageddon will destroy civilization as we know it, and perhaps most of the biosphere, at least for many decades.

### AT: Nuke War DA

#### Saudi Arabia’s nuclear program won’t be used for nuclear weapons.

Sukin 15 Lauren (Sukin is an editor and researcher at The Century Foundation. She is currently studying political science and literary arts at Brown University, where she will be a senior this fall.) “In Saudi Arabia, nuclear energy for nuclear energy’s sake” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists July 28th 2015 <http://thebulletin.org/saudi-arabia-nuclear-energy-nuclear-energy%E2%80%99s-sake8570> JW

Energy or weapons? The key question stands: Is peaceful nuclear energy in the Kingdom just a precursor to its more malicious, military form? Perhaps the biggest determinant of whether a country will build a weapon is whether it wants one. Despite some chest-thumping, there is reason to believe Saudi Arabia does not. Saudi Arabia has signed a memorandum of understanding with the United States and committed to nonproliferation projects including the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. There is no hard evidence that the country is setting itself up for a military nuclear program. The Saudis’ first option for acquiring a nuclear weapon is Pakistan. The Kingdom provided generous funds for Pakistan’s nuclear project, even bankrolling much of A. Q. Khan’s notorious nuclear smuggling ring. Today, some Pakistani nuclear warheads are rumored to be earmarked for fast, free delivery to the Saudis. Lesser versions of the claim say Pakistan would be willing to sell “off-the-shelf” bombs, or at least their designs. Nevertheless, there’s no evidence that the Saudis have actually turned to Pakistan in this capacity, and when rumors on the subject flew in March, Saudi Arabia denied them. The second option is DIY: build nuclear energy technology, and then use it to build nuclear weapons technology. However, Saudi Arabia doesn’t even plan to have its full fleet of reactors operational until 2040, and its first reactor won’t be online until 2022. That timeline leaves it decidedly behind Iran and makes a severe dent in any intentions the country might have to capitalize on the dual-use nature of nuclear energy technology. If the Saudis really want to go nuclear, they ought to speed up their first stages. Saudi Arabia doesn’t seem to want a weapon, and it doesn’t really need one. As Selim Sazak and I recently argued in The National Interest, Saudi Arabia’s conventional superiority and current US security guarantees are enough to solve regional security concerns. And there are disincentives. If caught with a military nuclear program, the Saudis would face huge consequences: sanctions, a loss of faith by key international allies, the likely dismantling of any civilian nuclear program, and perhaps even military conflict—all of which are surely undesired.

### More Impx

DA outweighs on probability- Saudi Arabia is on the path to the bomb and war with Iran- the perception of instability fuels conflict. Hannah[[1]](#footnote-1) ‘13

Pundits and policymakers are missing the big worry about the Obama administration's Iranian nuclear deal: its greatest impact is not ensuring that Iran doesn't get the bomb, but that the Saudis will.

Indeed, **the risk of arms race in the Middle East -- on a nuclear hair trigger** -- **just went up** rather dramatically. And it increasingly looks like **the** coming **Sunni-Shiite war will be nuclearized.**

Two aspects of the agreement, in particular, will consolidate Saudi fears that an Iranian bomb is now almost certainly coming to a theater near them. First, the pre-emptive concession that the comprehensive solution still to be negotiated will leave Iran with a permanent capability to enrich uranium -- the key component of any program to develop nuclear weapons. In the blink of an eye, and without adequate notice or explanation to key allies who believe their national existence hangs in the balance, the United States appears to have fatally compromised the long-standing, legally-binding requirements of at least five United Nations Security Council resolutions. If the Saudis needed any confirmation that last month's rejection of a Security Council seat was merited -- on grounds that U.S. retrenchment has rendered the organization not just irrelevant, but increasingly dangerous to the kingdom's core interests -- they just got it, in spades. Second, the agreement suggests that even the comprehensive solution will be time-limited. In other words, whatever restrictions are eventually imposed on Iran's nuclear program won't be permanent. The implication is quite clear: At a point in time still to be negotiated (three years, five, ten?) and long after the international sanctions regime has been dismantled, the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear program will be left unshackled, free to enjoy the same rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty as any other member in good standing. That looks an awful lot like a license to one day build an industrial-size nuclear program, if Iran so chooses, with largely unlimited ability to enrich uranium and reprocess plutonium, a la Japan.

But of course **Iran** is not Japan -- a peaceful, stable democracy aligned with the West. It is a bloody-minded, terror-sponsoring, hegemony-seeking revisionist power that has serially violated its non-proliferation commitments and which **aims** **to** destroy Israel, drive America out of the Middle East, and **bring down the House of Saud**.Whether or not President Obama fully appreciates that distinction, the Saudis most definitely do.Of course, Saudi concerns extend well beyond the four corners of last week's agreement. **For Riyadh, Iran's march to**ward **the bomb is** only the most dangerous element -- **the *coup de grace*** in its expanding arsenal, if you will -- **of an** **ongoing**, region-wide **campaign to overturn the Middle East's existing order** in favor of one dominated by Tehran. **The** **destabilization** and weakening **of Saudi Arabia is** absolutely **central to that project**, and in Saudi eyes has been manifested in a systematic effort by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to extend its influence and tentacles near and far, by sowing violence, sabotage, terror, and insurrection -- in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and most destructively of all, in the IRGC's massive intervention to abet the slaughter in Syria and salvage the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Fairly or not, from the Saudi perspective, the nuclear deal not only ignores these central elements of the existential challenge that Iran poses to the kingdom's well-being, it threatens to greatly exacerbate them by elevating and legitimizing the Islamic Republic's claim to great power status. As surely as Obama's chemical weapons deal with Syria implicitly green-lighted the intensification of the Assad regime's murder machine, so, too, **the Saudis fear**, a nuclear deal with the mullahs will grant a free hand -- if not an implicit American imprimatur -- to **the** long-standing **Iranian quest for regional supremacy that**, to Saudi minds, **won't end until it reaches Mecca** and Medina.   It should be said that Saudi paranoia about being sacrificed on the altar of a U.S.-Iranian deal is nothing new. But the fact is that, today, the Saudis look around and believe they've got more reasons than ever before to think that they're largely on their own. As the saying goes, even paranoids have enemies. On one issue after another that they've deemed absolutely vital to their interests -- Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and now Iran -- the Saudis view the Obama administration as having been at best indifferent to their most urgent concerns, and at worst openly hostile. To Saudi minds, a very clear and dangerous pattern has now been conclusively established. And its defining characteristic is not pretty at all to behold: the selling out of longtime allies, even betrayal. Indeed, the Saudi listen to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rail against the Iran deal and realize that even Israel, by leaps and bounds America's foremost friend in the Middle East, is not immune. And they wonder where in the world does that leave them. How do you say "screwed" in Arabic? The crisis of confidence in the reliability, purposes, and competence of American power has reached an all-time high. The Saudis have taken due note of National Security Advisor Susan Rice's declaration that "[there's a whole world out there](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/world/middleeast/rice-offers-a-more-modest-strategy-for-mideast.html?_r=0" \t "_blank)" beyond the Middle East that needs attention, and her predecessor's lament that the United States had "[over-invested](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/08/15/us-egypt-policy-priorities/2662285/" \t "_blank)" in the region. **The kingdom has become** increasingly **convinced** that **there's a** method to Obama's madness, **a systematic effort to reduce America's** exposure and **involvement in the region**'s conflicts, to downsize Washington's role and leadership, to retrench and, yes, to retreat. Whatever the reason -- a weak and unprincipled president, a tired and fed up population, a broken economy and dysfunctional politics, growing energy independence (the Saudis cite all these and more) -- there's a growing conviction in Riyadh that the United States has run dangerously short of breath when it comes to standing by its allies in the Middle East. Obama wants out. Face-saving deals on issues like Syria and Iran that are designed not to resolve the region's most dangerous problems, but rather to defer them from exploding until he's safely out of office are the order of the day -- Saudi vital interests be damned ... or so they fear.   It must be noted that the breach in trust has become intensely personal. The Saudi dismay with Obama and his chief lieutenants is hard to overstate at this point. Secretary of State John Kerry in particular has become a target of derision. In the days immediately following the Assad regime's Aug. 21 chemical weapons attack, the phone calls between Kerry and senior Saudi leaders apparently ran fast and furious. Proof that Syria had smashed Obama's red line on chemical weapons was overwhelming, Kerry assured his interlocutors. A U.S. attack to punish the Assad regime was a sure thing. The Saudis were ecstatic, convinced that at long last Obama was prepared to get off the sidelines and decisively shift the conflict's trajectory in favor of the West and against Iran. Intelligence, war planning and targeting information were allegedly exchanged. Hints abound that the Saudis were ginned up not only to help finance the operation, but to participate actively with planes and bombs of their own. King Abdullah is rumored to have ordered relevant ministries to prepare to go to the Saudi equivalent of DEFCON 2, the level just short of war. Then, on Aug. 31, the Saudis turned on CNN, expecting to watch President Obama announce the imminent enforcement of his red-line -- only to see him flinch by handing the decision off to Congress. The Saudis were enraged, dumbfounded, and convinced that Kerry had deliberately deceived and misled them. Told that Kerry himself had been caught largely unaware by Obama's decision, the Saudis were hardly mollified. A liar or an irrelevancy? Either one was disastrous from their perspective. Unfortunately, the routine has repeated itself several times since -- on one issue after another considered critical to Saudi interests. Hence: Riyadh learned about the U.S.-Russia deal on Syria's chemical weapons from CNN. Riyadh learned about Obama's decision to suspend large chunks of military assistance to Egypt from CNN. And two weeks ago, Riyadh learned that the P5+1 was on the verge of signing an initial (and from its perspective, very bad) deal with Iran from CNN -- even though Kerry had just been in Saudi Arabia*earlier that week*in an effort to contain at least some of the fallout from the Syria fiasco. Instead, he ended up doubling down on the breach. Detailed revelations in recent days that for the better part of a year, the Obama administration has been [engaged](http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2013/11/26/john-kerry-developed-secret-dialogue-with-iran-through-oman/rRBZZ8aeDrsP2Q2HdoWJEJ/story.html" \t "_blank) in secret bilateral talks with Iran that it sought to keep hidden from its allies -- while merely adding detail to what the Saudis had already suspected from their own sources -- will no doubt only further stoke the kingdom's fears that the fix is in between Washington and the mullahs. An atmosphere this poisonous is dangerous, to say the least. The incentive for the Saudis to engage in all kinds of self-help that Washington would find less than beneficial, even destructive, is significant and rising. Driven into a corner, feeling largely abandoned by their traditional superpower patron, no one should doubt that the Saudis will do what they believe is necessary to ensure their survival. It would be a mistake to underestimate their capacity to deliver some very unpleasant surprises: from the groups they feel compelled to support in their escalating proxy war with Iran, to the price of oil, to their sponsorship (and bankrolling) of a much expanded regional role for Russia and China at America's expense. Convincing ourselves that the Saudis will bitch and moan, but in the end prove powerless to act in ways that harm key U.S. interests would be a very risky strategy. Which brings us to the question of the Saudi bomb. King **Abdullah** **has been unequivocal** with a series of high-level interlocutors going back several years: **If Iran gets the bomb, we get the bomb**. There's not much artifice to the man. He's been clear. He's been consistent. He's not known to bluff. And I believe him. Whether or not all the stories about the[longstanding arrangements](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/11/08/the_nuclear_handshake_saudi_arabia_pakistan)with the Pakistani nuclear program are true, there's enough of a link there that no one should be too shocked if we wake up next week, next month, or next year to discover that a small nuclear arsenal has suddenly shown up in the Saudi order of battle. If the prospect of an Israel-Iran nuclear standoff doesn't quite get your pulse to racing, how do you feel about adding a Saudi-Iran standoff to the mix? **Think of two nuclear powers** eyeball to eyeball **across the Strait of Hormuz -- with religious hatreds** boiling over, **ballistic missile** **flight times measured in minutes, and command and control protocols**, well, **less than robust**. Even short of a nuclear exchange, what do you think that would do to the price premium on a barrel of oil? Can anyone say "instant global recession"?

2. Collapse causes unrest in 9 countries and immediate shocks to the global economy, spurs terrorism and collapse of US hegemony- multiple specific scenarios for spillover. Riedel[[2]](#footnote-2) ‘13

Saudi Arabia is the world’s last absolute monarchy. Like Louis XIV,[King Abdullah has complete authority](http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/06/24/a-game-of-thrones-in-saudi-arabian-succession-plans.html)to do as he likes. But while a revolution in Saudi Arabia is still not likely, the Arab Awakening has made one possible for the first time, and it could come in President Obama’s second term.**Revolutionary change in the kingdom would be a disaster** for American interests across the board. Saudi Arabia is America’s oldest ally in the Middle East, a partnership that dates to 1945. The United States has no serious option for heading off a revolution if it is coming; we are already too deeply wedded to the kingdom. Obama should ensure the best possible intelligence is available to see a crisis coming and then try to ride the storm.Still , the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a proven survivor. Two earlier Saudi kingdoms were defeated by the Ottoman Empire and eradicated. The Sauds came back. They survived a wave of revolutions against Arab monarchies in the 1950s and 1960s. A jihadist coup attempt in 1979 seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca but was crushed. Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda staged a four-year insurrection to topple the Sauds and failed less than a decade ago. Saudi al Qaeda cadres remain in the kingdom and next door in Yemen.Today the Arab Awakening presents the kingdom with its most severe test to date. The same demographic challenges that prompted revolution in Egypt and Yemen, a very young population and very high underemployment, apply in Saudi Arabia.[Extreme gender discrimination](http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/07/29/women-rise-up-in-saudi-arabia-the-rebellion-behind-the-veil.html), long-standing regional differences, and a restive Shia minority add to the explosive potential. In recognition of their vulnerability, the Saudi royals have spent more than $130 billion since the Arab Awakening began to try to buy off dissent at home. They have made cosmetic reforms to let women sit in a powerless consulting council.Abroad they have sent tanks and troops across the King Fahd Causeway to stifle revolution in Bahrain, brokered a political deal in Yemen to replace Ali Abdullah Salih with his deputy, and sought closer unity among the six Gulf Cooperation Council monarchies. They also have invited Jordan and Morocco to join the kings’ club. But they are pragmatists too and have backed revolutions in Libya and Syria that fight old enemies of the kingdom.If an awakening takes place in Saudi Arabia, it will probably look a lot like the revolutions in the other Arab states. Already demonstrations, peaceful and violent, have wracked the oil rich Eastern Province for more than a year. These are Shia protests and thus atypical of the rest of the kingdom. Shia dissidents in ARAMCO, the Saudi oil company, also have used cyberwarfare to attack its computer systems, crashing more than 30,000 work stations this August. They probably received Iranian help.Much more disturbing to the royals would be **protests in Sunni parts** of the kingdom. These **might start in** **the** so-called **Quran Belt** north of the capital, **where dissent is endemic,** or in the poor Asir province on the Yemeni border. Once they begin, **they could** **snowball and reach** the **major cities** of the Hejaz, including Jeddah, Mecca,[Taif](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/01/14/nightmare-in-saudi-arabia-the-plight-of-foreign-migrant-workers.html), and Medina. The Saudi opposition has a vibrant information technology component that could ensure rapid communication of dissent within the kingdom and to the outside world.The critical defender of the regime would be **the National Guard**. Abdullah has spent his life building this Praetorian elite force. The United States has trained and equipped it with tens of billions in helicopters and armored vehicles. But the key unknown is whether the Guard will shoot on its brothers and sisters in the street. It **may fragment** **or** it may simply **refuse to suppress dissent** if it is largely peaceful, especially at the start.The succession issue adds another layer of complication. Every succession in the kingdom since its founder, Abdel Aziz bin Saud, died in 1953 has been to his brothers. King Abdullah and Crown Prince Salman are the end of the brood; only a couple of possible remaining half brothers are suitable. Both the king and crown prince are ill, and both are often unfit for duty. If Abdullah and/or Salman die as unrest begins—a real possibility—and a succession crisis ensues, then the kingdom could be even more vulnerable to revolution.As in other Arab revolutions, the opposition revolutionaries will not be united on anything except ousting the monarchy. There will be secular democrats but also al Qaeda elements in the opposition. Trying to pick and choose will be very difficult. The **unity** of the kingdom **could collapse as** the **Hejaz separates** from the rest, **the east falls to Shia, and the center becomes a jihadist stronghold**.For the United States, revolution in Saudi Arabia would be a game changer. While **the U.S. can live withou**t **Saudi oil, China, India, Japan, and Europe cannot**. **Any disruption** **in** Saudi **oil** exports—whether **due to unrest**, cyberattacks, **or a** new regime’s **decision to reduce exports** substantially—**will have a major impact on the global economy**. In addition, **the** CIA **war against al Qaeda is heavily dependent on the kingdom**: **Saudi** **intelligence** operations **foiled the last** two **attacks** **by a**l **Q**aeda in the **A**rabian **P**eninsula on the American homeland. **The U.S. military** training **mission** in the kingdom, founded in 1953, **is the largest of its kind** in the world. **The Saudis** also **have been** a **key** player **in containing Iran** for decades.**The other monarchs of Arabia**, meanwhile, **would be in jeopardy** if revolution comes to Saudi Arabia. The Sunni minority in **Bahrain could not last without Saudi money** and tanks. Despite all their money, **Qatar, Kuwait, and the U**nited **A**rab **E**mirates are city states that **would be unable to defend themselves** against a revolutionary regime in what had been the kingdom. **The Hashemite dynasty in Jordan would be at risk** as well **without Saudi** and Gulf **money and oil**. Only Oman is probably isolated and strong enough to endure.America has no serious options for effecting gradual reform in the kingdom. The Saudis fear, probably rightly, that real power sharing is impossible in an absolutist state. But we should plan very quietly for the worst. The intelligence community should be directed to make internal developments, not just counterterrorism, its top priority in the kingdom now. We cannot afford a surprise like Iran in 1978, and we need to know the players in the opposition, especially the Wahhabi clerics, in depth. This will be a formidable challenge, but it is essential to preparing for a very dark swan.

1. JOHN HANNAH , “[Fear and Loathing in the Kingdom](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/11/29/iran_saudi_arabia_nuclear_war_obama)”. Foreign Policy, Online, NOVEMBER 29, 2013.<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/11/29/iran_saudi_arabia_nuclear_war_obama>. RP 3/9/14 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bruce Riedel, “Revolution in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?”. The Daily Beast, January 20, 2013. Quals: Bruce Riedel is director of Brookings new Intelligence Project. He has served as an adviser in the White House to the last four presidents. <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/01/20/revolution-in-the-kingdom-of-saudi-arabia.html>. RP 3/9/14 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)